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The Academy opposes H.R. 9087 provision on USAID

Washington, D.C. – Reorganizing American foreign assistance deserves to be approached carefully, transparently, and in close cooperation with Congress. H.R. 9087 is the antithesis of a careful approach, giving the Secretary of State complete authority to design USAID’s merger into the State Department without congressional consultation or approval. The American Academy of Diplomacy strongly opposes this bill.

America’s ability to deliver assistance effectively has been gravely damaged by the hasty and careless way in which USAID was dismantled. Even programs that were to be retained have been crippled by dismissing the people who could run them. This history argues against trusting the future organization of all U.S. foreign assistance to those who have shown so little foresight in their first actions.

Additionally, any new legislation should provide for the many current and former employees of USAID who have served America honorably. The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1988, on which the current proposal rests, stated explicitly that with regard to the transfer of “any function” of USAID to the State Department, all **“AID personnel performing such functions and all positions associated with such functions shall be transferred to the Department of State at the same grade or class and the same rate of basic pay or basic salary rate and with the same tenure held immediately preceding transfer.”** Similar consideration for people should be part of any new arrangement.

The Academy believes that the best strategic interest of our country in restructuring foreign assistance requires bipartisan engagement by our Congress, including through comprehensive hearings. This was the process that led to the passage of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1988, the mechanisms of which the current effort attempts to use without any of the thought which went into the original.

The Academy is a non-partisan organization made up of retired senior diplomats and other national security professionals who have served in the most consequential positions of U.S. national security, in the United States and abroad. The Academy is dedicated to improving the ability of the Department of State and other national security agencies to serve elected leaders and the American people.

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Strengthening American Diplomacy

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